

February 2021

Friends,

In anticipation of the upcoming historical vote by the Board of Trustees on the name of our university, I have attached a piece entitled "George Washington and Robert E. Lee, the Importance of Our Namesakes." The essay makes four essential points:

There are numerous historical ties between the families of George Washington and Robert E. Lee, and both families were involved in the birth of our nation and its ongoing evolution.

Both George Washington and Robert E. Lee were interested and involved with education, not only academic instruction, but also practical and moral education.

Both men supported reconciliation after long and divisive wars.

The personal association of George Washington and Robert E. Lee with our university has been a successful "branding" strategy for over 225 years.

In our letter, we felt it was necessary to defend the reputation of George Washington as well as Robert E. Lee since some

younger alums and faculty members have called for the elimination of Washington's name in addition to Lee's. The essay has been signed by members of The Generals Redoubt's Board of Directors and Board of Advisors. It is accompanied by two videos which demonstrate recent examples of successful branding. The first is a video about the 1992 university capital campaign entitled "On the Shoulders of Giants."

<https://youtu.be/Tf6xMCuUIRc>

The second is a more recent video from 2010 and entitled "Echoes of the Past, Voices of the Future."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EvVxBStKOvY> Both videos proclaim the long and historical connection of Washington and Lee University with its namesakes. The videos are not as strong visually as they were when originally produced, but if individuals will pay attention to the audio, they will know how essential both George Washington and Robert E. Lee have been to our school's success.

On Thursday, January 28th, WSLS, Channel 10, Roanoke interviewed me about who The Generals Redoubt was and why we opposed changing the name of the University. Another alumna, Betsy Green, represented the position of those who favored a name change. Incidentally, Ms. Green is one of those who has expressed the desire to remove the name of George Washington as well as that of Robert E. Lee from our school. Anyone may view the interview by going to the WSLS website link which is <https://www.wsls.com/news/local/2021/01/28/debate-continues-over-future-of-washington-and-lees-name/>

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